

Message Text

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ACTION AF-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-05 DRC-01 RSC-01 /013 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO USDOC WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, TS

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE BREAKTHROUGH ON SALE OF PHARMACEUTICAL
PRODUCTS TO TUNISIA

1. DR. KALLAL, ONE OF TWO ADMINISTRATORS OF THE TUNISIAN CENTRAL PHARMACY, INFORMED EMBASSY IN CONFIDENCE THAT HE HAS RECEIVED WRITTEN INSTRUCTION FROM PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE TO PLAY MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN CENTRAL PHARMACY IN ORDER ELIMINATE REPORTED ABUSES IN ITS IMPORT ACTIVITIES. CENTRAL PHARMACY IS STATE ENTERPRISE HAVING MONOPOLY OVER ALL IMPORTS OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS INTO TUNISIA. KALLAL CLAIMS THAT HE IS SEEKING TO USE AUTHORITY GIVEN HIM TO OBTAIN MORE EVEN BREAK FOR U.S. PRODUCTS IN THIS MARKET.

2. PRESIDENT DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE CENTRAL PHARMACY, MOHAMED FEKIH, HAS CONTROLLED IMPORTS OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS WITH IRON HAND IN PAST AND GENERALLY APPROVED IMPORTS ONLY FROM EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPE, PARTICULARLY FRANCE. AS RESULT, IT HAS BEEN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR U.S. TO BREAK INTO TUNISIAN MARKET FOR PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES.

3. IN MEETING ON FEBRUARY 8, FEKIH CHARGED THAT U.S. SUPPLIERS HAVE NOT BEEN DEPENDABLE EVEN WHEN COST AND QUALITY IS SATISFACTORY. WHEN KALLAL ASKED FOR SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, FEKIH SAID THAT LAST FALL CENTRAL PHARMACY

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HAD AWARDED CONTRACT FOR VITAMIN C TO BYRON CHEMICAL CO.,

40-11 23RD ST., LONG ISLAND CITY, NY (TEL ST 68441),
BUT CHARGED THAT IN NOVEMBER BYRON RENEGED ON ITS
FIRM OFFER WHEN NOTIFIED OF SELECTION. KALLAL PROMISED
INVESTIGATE MATTER TO SEE IF ANY TRUTH TO CHARGES.

4. IN MEANTIME, KALLAL RECEIVED APPROVAL TO SEEK
QUOTATIONS FROM U.S. FIRMS FOR 2 IMPORTANT PRODUCTS
FOR TOTAL VALUE OF ABOUT \$120,000 TO SEE WHETHER U.S.
PRODUCTS ARE COMPETITIVE WITH THAT OBTAINED ELSEWHERE.
TWO PRODUCTS ARE:

(A) 3 METRIC TONS OF CRYSTALIZED OXYTETRACYCLINE BASE;
(B) 5 MILLION ROLLS OF NON-STERILE, HYDROFILE BANDAGE
GAUZE, SINGLE PLY, STANDARD MESH, FIVE METERS LONG AND
7CM WIDE.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: BELIEVE RAPID AND THOROUGH RESPONSE
TO KALLAL SOMEWHAT UNUSUAL REQUESTS MAY LEAD TO GREATER SALES OF
U.S. PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS IN TUNISIA.

A. PLEASE DETERMINE FROM BYRON CHEMICAL CO. REASONS
FOR NON-DELIVERY (NOTE: FEKIH CLAIMED BYRON HAD
SUBMITTED FIRM TENDER BUT KALLAL UNAWARE OF QUANTITY
INVOLVED OR PERIOD OF VALIDITY OF BYRON OFFER).

B. IF POSSIBLE, OBTAIN QUOTATION CIF TUNIS FOR GAUZE
AND TETRACYCLINE BASE DESCRIBED ABOVE FROM APPROPRIATE
NUMBER OF U.S. FIRMS SHOWING DELIVERY PERIOD AND ANY
OTHER CONDITIONS. PLEASE TELEGRAPH SUMMARY TO EMBASSY
AND HAVE FIRMS CONFIRM THEIR QUOTATIONS DIRECTLY TO
PHARMACIE CENTRALE DE TUNISIE, AVENUE CHARLES NICOLE,
EL MENZAH, TUNIS, TUNISIE.

SEELYE

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